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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 OTTAWA 000020

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S/CT FOR K. O'REILLY AND E. RYE

E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/09/2028
TAGS: [PTER](#) [PREL](#) [PINR](#) [PGOV](#) [CA](#)
SUBJECT: CANADA SEEKS U.S. ASSISTANCE WITH HOSTAGE POLICY
REVIEW

REF: OTTAWA-S/CT EMAILS 1/7/09

Classified By: PolMinCouns Scott Bellard, reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

11. (U) This is an action request -- see para three.

12. (S) Summary: Canada is for the first time planning on Cabinet endorsement by April of a formal national policy to respond to the kidnapping of its citizens by terrorists or criminals. A spate of five cases of kidnapped Canadians since June 2008 prompted political leaders to order this national strategy. Canada seeks to coordinate its policy as closely as possible with that of the U.S., and requests a comprehensive briefing on U.S. policy in hostage situations in Washington on January 29. End summary.

13. (S) Action Request: in response to USG assistance offers (ref emails), the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT) has requested U.S. help in drafting Canada's hostage policy and seeks meetings with Washington agencies more fully to understand NSPD-12. DFAIT senior policy advisor on counter-terrorism Neal Brennan, who is leading the Canadian inter-agency planning process, said his team wants to benefit from U.S. views early in the drafting process, and has requested to visit Washington on January 29 for discussions with U.S. counterparts. DFAIT also requests a releasable version of NSPD-12 to assist its policy formulation. Please advise. End action request.

14. (S) DFAIT is leading an inter-agency team to draft the hostage policy for approval by Cabinet by April, at the latest. According to DFAIT's Brennan, the spate of hostage and kidnapping incidents involving Canadian nationals since June 2008 motivated the Prime Minister's Office to order the drafting of a comprehensive national strategy. Brennan said that these five Canadian hostage cases had forced Canada to develop responses "on the fly" and that the inter-agency community constantly found itself revisiting important policy issues mid-crisis. Canadian political leaders now want to institutionalize a substantive policy framework in order better to manage future hostages situations safely and successfully, Brennan commented.

15. (S) Specifically, Brennan noted that DFAIT wants Canadian elected leaders to give a "high-level political blessing, especially with regard to policy on ransom payments." Brennan's task is to create a policy paper that enunciates broad principles for dealing with hostage-takers, the media, the families of victims, and interested third parties (i.e. insurance companies and employers). This policy document will also delineate the whole-of-government decision-making process and clarify governmental roles and responsibilities during a hostage crisis. Brennan added that his group will

likely later draft standard operating procedures to put the general policy guidance and principles into practice.

¶6. (S) Another area where Canada wants more thought and planning is on coordination among the "Four Eyes" partners. Brennan commented that mixed nationality hostage cases are seemingly becoming the norm, because, "where there is a Canadian, more often than not you'll find Americans, Brits, and Aussies, too." Toward that end, Brennan is seeking a better understanding of NSPD-12 and has requested that the U.S. provide Canada with a releasable version of the U.S. policy document. Brennan said that his terms of reference specifically order him to align Canadian policy as closely as possible with that of the U.S., even though Canada realizes it may have conflicting priorities in mixed U.S.-Canada hostage situations, given the much broader U.S. global strategic role. Senior Canadian officials nonetheless want to see as little divergence as possible, according to Brennan.

¶7. (S) Regarding specific policy issues to discuss with U.S. counterparts, Brennan cited the possibility of secretly negotiating with hostage-takers as a means of entrapping them, while publicly claiming "no negotiations with terrorists." Brennan added that Canadian interlocutors are also eager to learn whether NSPD-12 is integrated with broader personnel safety and recovery policy goals, which are also part of his terms of reference. Another thorny issue for Canada is policy toward third parties, in particular insurance companies that may have written policies for kidnapped Canadian nationals. Yet another issue arose with the recent kidnapping of a journalist from the Canadian

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Broadcasting Corporation, which is state-owned yet independent from the government. Brennan said that Canada was still contemplating how to deal with such entities and their employees who wander into harm's way. A final issue is the treatment of Canadian government employees compared with that of government contractors in hostage situations; Canada would appreciate hearing U.S. views in this area as well.

¶8. (S) Brennan would plan to lead the delegation to Washington and would likely bring along the following representatives:

- Department of National Defence (Nicholas Chapdelaine);
- Royal Canadian Mounted Police (one policy officer and one operations officer);
- Canadian Security and Intelligence Service (John Gilmour);
- Department of Public Safety (Emmanuel Deault-Bonin);
- Canadian Embassy representative.

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